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BARRY PAIN

Essays of To-day and Yesterday

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ESSAYS OF
TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY

BARRY PAIN



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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THESE short essays were written for *Nash's Magazine*, and have appeared in that periodical during the last few years. The condition of brevity imposed on me pleased me particularly, and always will please me, though of course it takes much longer to use a few words than to use many.

At the same time I am not sure that I can justify my title. These little trifles have not the length nor the dignity of the full-grown essay. In spite of the example of the house-agent, who now describes a gas-stove in a cupboard as a kitchenette, I could not bring myself to speak of essayettes. That was too nauseous.

But after all there is nothing in a name. If you like these things you can call them interesting notes. If you don't like them you can call them miserable snippets.

And you could have done all that without my permission? Quite so.

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WAITING

MAN said he would wait till he found his ideal before he married. Once he thought he had got it, but she happened to be waiting for her ideal too, and so there was nothing doing. He waited seventy-one years altogether, and never complained except about the extra on the income-tax; we tax all luxuries, including celibacy. He died happy, though single.

Contrariwise, some use words ending in 'amn' and 'ast' if they have to wait just two minutes for the next bus.

Quite natural. If you are waiting for the ideal girl, you can use that time in other ways—making money, learning foreign languages, or getting your hair cut. But if you have only two minutes to wait, those minutes are pinched out of your life. The only good work you can do in two minutes is giving to the poor, and you may be poor yourself.

Likewise there is a difference between doing a thing because you choose, and doing it because you must. Some men will sacrifice business, home, and mother to play golf. But if the magistrate sentenced one of them to half a crown or three rounds, the money would be paid. Waiting does not hurt; it is the having to wait which causes the inflammation.

Men may not make women wait, but women may make men wait, and do. This is not because they are unpunctual. They do it as a test of chivalry. As a test it is a trier and a searcher. Many a man who feels he could die for a girl has broken off the engagement

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because she was twenty minutes late at the Marble Arch. You can die for a girl in much under twenty minutes if the other man is a fair shot.

Even men who wait meekly during courtship often get restive after marriage. And why should the girl be surprised? Once we have settled with the box-office do we keep on paying for our seats? Let us be reasonable.

ABSENCE

ABSENCE is not properly valued except by the criminal classes, who know the advantage of not having been there when it was done.

People mostly will take more trouble to go anywhere than to stay away. If this were not so, charitable performances by untrainable amateurs could be made to earn money. Admission would be free, but you would pay to get out. The curate would sing thee songs of Araby a quarter-tone flat, and the repairs to the belfry would be financed automatically, if too many were not killed in the crush.

Yet the invitation to the social function pleases more than the function. There are public dinners, with plenty of speeches, to which it is an honour to be invited; but influenza on the day before comes to you like a free pardon to the condemned.

Custom makes cowards of us. Some think they must go to the seaside for their summer holiday or be disqualified. One day a brave man returning to the office will say:

“Thoroughly enjoyed my month’s absence from the

MISUNDERSTOOD

seaside. Glorious weather. Comfortable furnished house—same that I have the rest of the year—and no trouble at all.”

And his fellow-workers, just back from Gehenna-on-Sea, wearied, swindled, poisoned, flea-bitten, with sand in their hair, blisters on their noses, and bitterness in their hearts, will think that he knows something.

Kindness and the telephone prevent desirable absences. Mrs Thing rings up. You cannot think of an excuse offhand; besides, you dodged her last invitation. You would gladly murder her, but cannot hurt her feelings. So you dine at Mrs Thing's. The Calendar of Six Useful Lies for Every Day in the Year would hang in all telephone-rooms, and make more money for its publisher than the Shakespeare-quotation or Marcus Aurelius gadget.

A poet said: “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.” That was the way to talk, and much better than asking the girl to send in her resignation. That man knew how to discard.

MISUNDERSTOOD

ACCORDING to Victorian stories for children, it used to be a tragedy to be misunderstood. You died young, but were talkative to the last. You kept it going for pages, forgiving your mother and other enemies, while those by the bedside sobbed, and the moonlight streamed in on your pallid face. All very nice.

Coming down to the concrete, however, it is not

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necessarily fatal to be misunderstood, and is frequently advantageous.

If people think you are good but not at all clever, whereas you are really clever but not at all good, you may find it useful in your business. High character makes no money. All the saints were poor: they had to be that or go out of the profession. I am poor myself. But an undeserved reputation for high character offers opportunities to the talented. When embarking on a career of profitable crime, begin by taking a class in the Sunday school and being kind to rabbits. Get the halo first; then when you come to buy the jemmy, they will think that you want it to open the packing-case of your new harmonium.

Some feel hurt when their character is so much misunderstood that they are wrongly suspected of wickedness. But why? It is when you are perfectly understood, and rightly suspected, and the coining plant is hidden under the boards in the scullery, that you need to begin to worry. Except in stories and plays, misunderstandings have no wear in them: previous convictions, on the other hand, are recorded permanently.

You do not really need outside help to be misunderstood. You can do it yourself at home in your leisure hours, and you probably do. A little self-deception on the lenient side makes for comfort. Vanity is an irritant to its observer, but a demulcent to its proprietor.

"Know thyself," said the philosopher. It may be all right as long as you remember you need not tell everything you know. But it is not impossible that if everybody knew himself accurately and completely the coroners would have to work overtime.

COMPLAINTS

COMPLAINTS

THE invertebrate or soft-shelled section of humanity is desperately fond of making complaints. The males of this section can make nothing else except mistakes; the females sometimes add rice pudding and camisoles.

There are complaints that have value as action. It is well to report the intemperance of the waiter or the dishonesty of the booking-clerk, thus procuring them the requisite change of scenery. It is no earthly use to report the Post Office virgin for frozen face, languor, and far-awayness, because apparently the Post Office pays a bonus for such things.

But the chronic or soft-shelled complainer never makes a complaint that has any value, for she sends all her complaints to the wrong address. When her cook does that which should not have been done with the remainder of the rhubarb tart, she complains to the housemaid, squeals to her husband, whines to the gardener that it is heartbreaking to grow rhubarb under the circumstances, and bores her visitors stiff with the story. But she says nothing to the cook.

She does not complain to the employee about the wrong change, nor to the employer about the employee. She prefers to tell the lady next door that this is the second time that man has swindled her, and that she really thinks somebody ought to do something about it. She always expects somebody else to do her job, thus showing that it is possible to be cowardly without ceasing to be imbecile.

It has been said that the best way to create an

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impression of strength is never to complain of the conduct of others or to explain your own. You need to be actually strong to take this advice; otherwise I would begin on it to-morrow, though late in life. Meanwhile, the complaint with the punch behind it, reaching its objective, seems useful to the average man.

But complaints are like drugs. They lose force from frequency, and they must be sent to the right spot: you do not relieve the sprained ankle by drinking the embrocation.

THE STRONG MAN

ON the stage the strong, silent man may be known by the fact that he does most of the talking. Watch him as he faces the infuriated mob, grasping his revolver in one hand and foreclosing the mortgage with the other. He is terrific, but popular with the palpitating audience.

In real life the strong man puts in less chin and eyebrow work, and is considerably less popular. He has neither vine-leaves in his hair nor billiard-chalk in his pocket, being exempt from all human vices except cruelty and avariciousness—that is to say, firmness and business qualities.

He never makes a bad debt or a good friend. He does not know what fear is, but he knows what the law is, and allows a sixteenth-of-an-inch margin. He is unflinching in his purpose. The purpose is selfish, but there is absolutely no flinch—stand clear there, you boys! He is a real worker, but he knows enough to make others work for him while he takes the money at

HOPE

the turnstile. He has no sense of humour, but never puts himself in a position where he will need it. And he ends up with enough money to buy all the things that he is incapable of enjoying.

The weak man is all failings and folly. He suffers from prolongation of the luncheon-hour and the weekend. He knows the table of capacity, and will have to learn apothecaries' measure later. He will lend more than he can afford to a man who, as he well knows, will never return it. He helps the undeserving, with the silly idea that they need it as much as better people and possibly more. He dies poor. Black is the picture.

Weakness is despicable. Let us make no mistake about it. All the same, no human being was ever loved who had not a touch of it.

Strength is admirable. That is a sure thing. But it needs to be diluted before it is fit for ordinary human consumption.

HOPE

A MAN said, "While I breathe I hope," but no fish rose. So he turned the remark into Latin and tried again. And then everybody saw it was a splendid motto, and there was loud applause. *Dum spiro spero!* Put like that, it sounds good, and implies armorial bearings, sunlight through stained glass, and the great organ.

But the trouble with these mottoes and proverbs, whether in plain English or dressed for Sunday, is that they give us the block of concrete when our order is for a yard of elastic. They will not stretch. They

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make no allowance for the individual or the circumstances.

Hope is a good horse if you can drive him, but you cannot drive him on the snaffle. His mouth is hard and his temperament feverish. Expectation is hope that has bolted with you. Disappointment is the precipice in the offing.

You hope that Aunt Jane will leave you her money. Presently you will find that you are expecting that Aunt Jane will leave you her money. Then, as you will have all Aunt Jane's money, it is not worth while to work. So you sit and dream how you will spend her fortune—reasonable luxury for, say, yourself, but also a wise generosity to which complimentary references will be made in the pulpit and the Press. Then Aunt Jane dies and, being of sound mind and understanding, leaves the whole bunch to me, and I can do with it. And you go staggering down the hill that has an inquest at the bottom of it.

The lazy use hope as a substitute for work. Gamblers use it as a protection against arithmetic. The wise use it in moderation as a preventive of despair.

Wishing to know if the ambitious were peculiarly and specially hopeful, I put the question to the most ambitious man I know.

Without looking up from his job that ambitious man said: "Can't you see I'm busy?"

While you breathe you hope, but you can do both unconsciously and without interference with your normal occupation.

BAD EXAMPLES

BAD EXAMPLES

BAD examples are often supposed to be bad, but the trouble with most of them is that they are not nearly bad enough. An extremely bad example does good in the world.

For instance, in Russia in the eighteenth century high officials in search of further advancement used to pay court to the pet monkey of the paid favourite of an old woman of sixty. The woman was the Empress Catharine II and the favourite was Plato Zuboff—I have forgotten the Christian name of the other monkey. Recall this historical fact next time you are tempted to do a low-down thing. It will make you lose all heart for the work. You will feel that a rabbit like yourself cannot compete. The temptation will let go and drop off.

A man read that fact while he was swindling a railway company by travelling first class with a third-class ticket. His offence was not detected, but of his own accord he handed the difference in the fares to the collector at the barrier. (Yes, the collector is back again at work now, but seems much aged and his hand shakes.)

Moderation may be a lure, and excess may be a warning. The moderate drinker may make the abstainer change his mind, and the habitual drunkard may scare him back to abstinence again.

Our office-boy sneaked the elastic from his little sister's knickers to make a catapult, and hit the child in the face with his very first shot. His sins were ascribed to the bad example of the highwayman he saw on the film. But he was attracted by the highwayman's

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courage, chivalry, cleverness, horsemanship, and skill in the use of weapons, and these are all good things. It looks as if a good example, with a dash of murder and robbery in it, might be an over-rich mixture for the young.

However, owing to conscience and a sort of distaste for publicity, penal servitude, and premature death, but few of us will ever be bad enough to be really beneficial. The safe alternative is to be absolutely and altogether good. I am beginning next Sunday. What about yourself?

FORGIVENESS

THE souls of the departed were ranged before the Archangel, that he might choose from them the legion of those who had forgiven much.

He found many who had forgiven the infidelity of a spouse, many who had forgiven the enemies who had brought them to destruction, and many who had forgiven other great offences.

But when he asked for those who had forgiven a social snub, only Ananias held up his hand.

It is easier to forgive the great offence than the trivial, for much the same reason that we swear when we break our bootlaces, but not when we break our hearts—only that which penetrates deeply can find our virtue. The smaller sizes in forgiveness are apparently not stocked. One woman may forgive another for annexing her lover, but not for copying her hat. One man is more likely to forgive another for forging his name than for misspelling it.

THE PEDANT

Few forgive well. Opportunities for practice are frequent, but opportunities do not always synchronize with inclination. On Monday you feel that you could forgive anything, but the material is not there. On Tuesday at the station you find that the train which Smith so kindly and carelessly looked out for you belongs to the Saturdays-only class, but during the seventy-eight minutes that you have to wait the inclination to forgive Smith may never even occur to you.

If you cannot forgive and forget, at least do not forgive and remind. There is pathos in that cry of the erring husband to his wife : " If you can't forgive me, my dear, without talking quite so much about it, I'd sooner you cut out the forgiveness."

The act of forgiveness is as fine as its motive, but not finer.

" I'd fight you," said the good boy, " if I weren't going to be confirmed on Sunday. As it is, I shall forgive you."

" Funk," said the bad boy. And his diagnosis was correct.

THE PEDANT

THE pedant thinks that he loves correctness: in reality he loves correcting. It gives him no pleasure to find that you write or speak correctly, but the detection of your error makes him flap and cluck like an excited hen.

A wealthy pedant on his deathbed was visited by the two nephews to whom he had bequeathed his property in equal shares. John spoke to him quite correctly, but

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James used 'who' for 'whom' and put a plural verb with 'none,' so that Uncle had to correct him twice. And just before he died Uncle altered his will and left the entire parcel to James. And why? Because John had given him nothing, but James had given him that sense of superiority which raises the temperature agreeably in the region of the solar plexus.

When you meet a pedant it is a kindly act to toss him a wrong date or a false quantity. He will leap at it with apparent fury, but he will love you for it afterwards. You have been the platform without which he could not have performed.

The importance of accuracy is a relative importance. Our eminent surgeon habitually mispronounces the word prognosis, but it has not been found that this affects his skill as an appendix-shifter. And the good pilot would mispronounce the word aeroplane if he ever used it, but he is paid more for piloting than for pronouncing. To write correctly is part of the beginning of an author's business, but there are some authors of repute who would sooner split an infinitive than a child's head.

The pedant gets many things right, but his sense of proportion is always wrong. And this seems a pity, because if the sense of proportion is wrong the rest does not matter much.

"Stones have been known to speak and trees to move." That has nothing to do with the subject, but I am leaving it as a lump of post-medicinal sugar for any pedant who comes this way. You see, it is a misquotation—something for him to trumpet about.

MAN-TESTS

THERE are tests for girders, eggs, diamonds, and truck of that kind which get the right answer every time, but the tests of a living animal may mislead. Many a man has died without leaving enough to pay for his funeral simply because he believed a racehorse would do the same thing twice. And it is harder to test men than horses.

But we love doing it and start early with the examinations of the schools. These show which of the young do well in such examinations, and then their light goes out. Some academic successes remain eminent in after-life, many more drop back to mediocrity, and some drop the entire distance. You may fail in such examinations because you are not good enough, or because you are too good, or because your nerves beat your mind.

Nerves often vitiate man-tests. She was a really pretty girl when she was not trying. But when she was photographed for the beauty competition she tried very hard, and her nerves blew up. So the picture looked as if the body had been in the water a fortnight and the face had been injured by the boathook. The trouble with some of us is not that we never can, but that we cannot when we would.

Time is the favourite test for character. Our cashier had been with us so long that we felt he was to be trusted. We were so sure that he could resist temptation that we did not pay him enough to keep him out of it. Meanwhile his family had grown very numerous, very ill, and very expensive. That was taken into account when he was sentenced.

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Then there is the temptation-test. If you use it, you will spoil some human material that otherwise might have been useful. Besides, temptation occurs so frequently in the natural state that it is a mistake to introduce the synthetic.

If you trust without testing you may lose money, or you may sell an entire edition of the *Encyclopædia Gigantica*.

In the first case you may make friends. If you never trust you never will.

LIMITATIONS

YES," he said, "I saw the smoke, but I don't meddle with no fire-alarms. Out of my line. I'm a bricklayer, I am."

His wife asked him to buy her some pins if he was going out. "I'm going out," he said, "but not to buy you no ruddy pins, and don't you think it. Shouldn't know how to set about it. Woman's job, that is."

But when he read that the Government was faced with a very serious and difficult problem, he said that, if left to him, he could settle the whole ensanguined question inside of ten minutes.

We will plead any limitation that spares us trouble; it is the lure of the labour-saving apparatus. Defective hearing has avoided many a recitation. My failing eyesight prevents me from reading amateur manuscripts, unless there is a fee attached, when the vision seems to clear.

We admit freely many other limitations. Ask your

THE KISS

next taxi-driver if he understands the Theory of Relativity, and he will be quite frank and plain-spoken about it. Some are even proud of them. I know a man who speaks about his inability to eat shellfish almost as if it had been conferred on him for valour in the field.

But there are also limitations which we will never admit. No man will admit that he has no sense of humour. And this is curious, for in the House of Commons the absence of any sense of humour inspires confidence and is a principal factor of success. The witty speaker gains his laugh and loses his career.

A man may even have limitations of which he is quite unaware. Ought we to tell him? There is a risk, for some prefer to have their sunken rocks uncharted.

Smith told his wife in the kindest possible way that she would never be able to play bridge properly even if she lived to be a hundred and made the game her sole occupation all the time. This was the cold truth, and seemed calculated to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Mrs Smith is applying for a judicial separation.

THE KISS

WHEN he was twenty, he kissed a girl of nineteen and she kissed him. They loved one another. He was happy.

When he was forty, he kissed another girl of nineteen, and she was very angry and said he was a disgusting old man. He did not care, for there were other girls.

When he was sixty, a girl of nineteen, for whom he

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had done some kindness, openly and of her own accord kissed him. And that broke his heart, for it meant that it was all over and his number was up. Old age has great privileges, and would gladly exchange the entire bunch for anything interesting.

The kiss is many things; amongst others it is the backbone of the film-industry. Eighty-seven per cent. of the exhibited films end with a kiss, and it is generally some kiss. Thoughtless young men in the audience think they would like to be playing the hero. But would they?

That poor hero has to do his kissing in a strong light in front of a camera with a photographer turning the handle and a producer ready to shout "Break away" at the right moment. In spite of this the actor's expression must suggest dreamy ecstasy and not acute colic. It is hard, cold work. It is so cold that no film-kiss is allowed to last more than fifty-three seconds; otherwise the heart's action would be impeded by icicles and the actor would die.

In reply to inquiries, your pretty girl-cousin is so closely related to you that you can just kiss her and make no fuss about it, but the relationship would not justify her brother in trying to borrow a little to be going on with. Among cousins the opposite sexes are the more nearly related.

The encyclopædia states that the kiss originated in a maternal caress M'yes. It has grown since. The same authority says that kissing is entirely unknown to the black and yellow races.

Drop another sixpence in the missionary-box, won't you?

FEAR

THE little girl at the menagerie desired to pat the tiger and to feed him with monkey-nuts. This could not be permitted, but Nurse said afterwards that it showed what courage the child had. The only thing it really showed was that the child's idea of a tiger was erroneous.

The eulogistic biographer wrote of his hero: "He simply did not know what fear was." But there is nothing heroic in doing that of which you are not afraid. Fear is an essential of heroism.

Caution is the reward of knowledge: fear is the penalty of imagination. The man who avoids an unnecessary risk in driving his car shows caution. The eminent novelist who cannot cross a field because two placid cows are grazing in it shows fear. He knows better, but he cannot help himself. In imagination those phlegmatic milk-producers have already got him down and are perforating him like a roll of music for an automatic piano.

To get rid of fear, put in something bigger. A bigger fear will serve the purpose. The man who is normally frightened of heights will do a Blondin act on the roof to escape from the burning house. A sense of duty will overcome a fear, but that is for heroes. So will the maternal instinct, but that is for heroines. For the imaginative, vanity will sometimes give the required effect. The imaginative play best when there is a good house.

Most men are ashamed of any fear, but all men have got a soft spot somewhere. The man who does not

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know what fear is is purely mythical. During the day the steeplejack did the most perilous feats with calm and courage. Alone on a dark night he walked an extra two miles because the short cut would have taken him through a grim churchyard.

He explained that he really liked walking exercise.

WORK

THE pretty girl who, being socially popular, is kept busy at enjoyment from 1 P.M. to 5 A.M. gets more tired than a bricklayer in the twenty-four hours, but the bricklayer does more work. Fatigue is not necessarily evidence of work done, and has been known to result from a day excursion to Blackpool.

It is almost better to marry the wrong girl than to choose the wrong work. Your right work is the work you do best, for your conceit may keep you up to it, weakness propping strength. Anything becomes work which is done under the wage-earning compulsion; actors and professional cricketers work when they play. Reluctance to do your own work need not mean a love of idleness, and may mean a love of liberty. You can put that point to your employer, but are not advised to bet on it.

The man who makes the proverbs says that a change of work is recreation. I desire to take him from his job in the proverb-factory, to give him a full hard day in a smithy, and to see how much he is recreated at the end of it. All the man really meant was that a change is a change; but he had an uneasy feeling that, if he

PATIENCE

put it like that, it would not get into the discovery class.

Work well done is almost the only legitimate cause for human satisfaction. Hence the wide prevalence of human discontent.

We have Scriptural authority for saying that work was originally instituted as a punishment. There are many men to-day in whom the sole relic of a religious education is their refusal to regard work in any other light.

PATIENCE

PATIENCE is a real stained-glass virtue, but slackness and cowardice often use the name as an *alias*. Patience endures an incurable evil, and waits long for a good result that cannot be got quickly. But a silly acquiescence with an evil that can be reduced or abolished is not patience. Criminals are the enemies of society: so are those who suffer from them and decline to prosecute. It is sometimes impossible to be a martyr without being an egoist.

Patience and perseverance are means to an end, but not more than that. The good car will take you a long way, but whether it takes you home or over the precipice depends on the driver. A man who had been refused five times by a woman remembered Bruce and the spider, proposed again, and was accepted. Some said he had earned his reward. The man himself found he had got his punishment, and the case will come on shortly.

The principal trials of patience are trifles. A man

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lost his fortune and his right leg, and bore both losses with patience. But he raged furiously on the morning when he lost a penny collar-stud while dressing.

We can be patient with trouble arising from our own stupidity. But perhaps the greatest trial of all is trouble arising from the stupidity of another. When you told the man three times over, as plainly as you could speak, and even then he came back with the wrong thing—well, dash it all!

Who was the most patient man on record? Job is proverbial, but perhaps the award should go to St Paul. He suffered fools gladly.

PERSONAL CHARM

ALL can recognize charm; few can describe it. It is frequent and harmless in children; it is more common and more dangerous from fifteen to fifty; it may be found in a delicate silvery way in old age. A few men have it—but only for women. Many women have it, both for men and women. It is frequently found in association with a slight shyness, rarely with self-consciousness, never with affectation, vanity, or cynicism.

Charm is to beauty what its fragrance is to a rose. The horticulturist's scentless rose may have beauty, but has no charm. Personal charm may exist in those who are not beautiful. It is of its essence that it is unintentional. If you look for it in yourself and find it, then it is not there. If you cannot find it, it may not be there, but it also may. It is the most

SIMPLICITY

complex thing that ever wore the appearance of perfect simplicity.

Charm is not entered for the Moral Attribute Stakes. The best woman in the world may have it, or may not. The worst woman in the world most certainly has it, or had it once. The woman of supreme personal charm who adds to it great ambition and but few scruples should be destroyed at once lest she destroy myriads. There is no room for Helen of Troy in a God-fearing, tax-paying, peace-loving community.

It is important to distinguish between natural charm and the synthetic variety. The synthetic variety is made up of a number of ingredients, including eyelashes, flattery, and half-revelations. It has been known to deceive the young and inexperienced. It is entirely under the owner's control, and can be exercised at will. When it is exercised you can hear the engine that produces it working noisily.

Under the influence of natural charm you hardly know that you are moving until you get there. And then!

SIMPLICITY

NINE people out of ten will tell you that simplicity is universally desirable.

The line "Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead" is poetry. The line "Beautiful Archibald Bunn is dead" is not poetry. Evelyn Hope will stand simplicity. Archibald Bunn will not.

There are several hundred methods, more or less elaborate, of cooking salmon. Epicures are generally

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agreed that the two simplest are also the best. But the simplest methods are not necessarily the best in the case of many other fish.

Of course the simplest way to eat salmon would be to eat it raw. This would also be the worst way. But it is the best way to eat oysters.

"He had the simplicity of a child," writes the admiring biographer of the Bishop. If the Bishop really had that, he was an invitation to crooks, an incentive to crime, and unfit for his office. "He had the simplest of tastes," says the obituary-merchant of the millionaire—this is always said about all millionaires. If you have the simplest of tastes, you miss the appreciation and enjoyment of much which is valuable, but for which an educated taste is required.

Yes, the valuation of simplicity is not quite so simple as simple folk might suppose. Perhaps it would be safe to say that when simplicity is good it is the best possible. But it is not always good.

The word 'simple' may mean 'silly'; it may also mean 'sincere.' But there are occasions in life when it is possible to be both simultaneously, and the man who made the dictionary knew something.

THE PLEASURES OF EXPENDITURE

WHEN our supreme financier turns fierce, picks up his axe, and goes out on the big-business war-path, able and prudent managing-directors hide in the strong-room and think about their funerals.

But if you gave the same financier a shilling with

THE PLEASURES OF EXPENDITURE

instructions to spend the whole of it on his own pleasures, you would have to send the nursemaid out with him to see that he did it. Otherwise he would plug the entire sum into the savings-bank.

What else could you expect? He started from scratch and was a multi-millionaire at fifty. That is a whole-time job. It took all his activities, coupled with a run of luck and not enough evidence to convict. He learned investment, including speculation, but he never had the time to learn the pleasures of expenditure.

He has a splendid picture-collection, a fine library, and a fairly successful racing-stable. But as he never knew anything of pictures, letters, or horses, he merely put up the money and the hired experts did the expenditure. The pleasure of buying through an expert something you cannot understand may be compared with the pleasure of kissing over the telephone a girl whom you have never seen and have your doubts about.

The millionaire of course has his pleasures. The conscious exercise of unusual power is a pleasure. So is the making of another million. But the pleasures of expenditure, as the ordinary man enjoys them, are a closed book to him.

All expenditure should be pleasurable. I am not referring to expenditure that may be called pathological. Last January a lady went to a great store to buy a pair of stockings on advantageous terms. Under the influence of sales-hysteria she also paid for a motor lawn-mower and a live puma. She had no garden or menagerie, and in the delivery van the puma ate the stockings. Pathological—one need not say more.

Even with this restriction it may seem a hard saying that all expenditure should be pleasurable. What, for

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example, is the pleasure of paying your rent or your income-tax? Well, there are grades of pleasure, and in such cases the ore is not so rich as in others. But the pleasure is there. It is the pleasure of knowing that the trouble is over for the time being. It is like the pleasure that maddening neuralgia gives you when it suddenly stops.

To get the full pleasures of expenditure you should steer between folly and wisdom and keep straight on. The trouble with folly is that it yields about 3 per cent. pleasure to 97 per cent. punishment. Hence the word 'folly.'

Wisdom is more specious. The wise man knows exactly what his income will be, plans out the expenditure item by item, leaves a margin, and lives strictly by schedule. It is dead safe. It is cold and strong. But there is not much thrill in it. It makes life too mechanical.

The man who never buys anything which he cannot really afford shows that he does not know how to live. Whether the compensating economy should be previous or subsequent to the extravagance is a question of temperament. But most people fast more easily after they are full-fed.

APOLOGIES

THE value of an apology lies in its spontaneity and sincerity. This does not seem to be generally appreciated.

Take, for example, the commercial apology. This appears in the advertisement column and is boldly

APOLOGIES

headed PUBLIC APOLOGY. It runs something like this:

Messrs Spell and Binder, manufacturers of the daintily flavoured Three-purpose Chewing-gum—the only chewing-gum that can also be used successfully to repair tyre-punctures and to remove pencil-marks from paper—deeply regret that owing to the enormous and ever-growing demand for this speciality there has recently been on some occasions a slight delay in delivery. They offer their most profound apologies to their customers, at the same time assuring them that arrangements have now been perfected to ensure promptitude for the future. *N.B.*—If it does not bounce when dropped, it is not genuine Three-purpose.

Now the above passes the spontaneity test. But what about the sincerity? It has not that appearance of sincerity which every good apology—and every good advertisement—should have.

Still less satisfactory is the demanded apology. The voluntary apology is an act of politeness: the demanded apology is an act of submission. Nobody wishes to do any more submitting than he can help.

If I get the solicitor's letter demanding the apology, I may, seeing a libel action in the middle distance and the bankruptcy court just behind, give the apology. I do not mean a word of it, and the man who gets it knows I do not mean a word of it.

The demanded apology is the worst kind of untruth. All untruth is immoral, but the untruth that cannot deceive is also contemptible.

The sincere voluntary apology is the only good apology. It is a credit to the man who gives it and to the man who accepts it.

It is also sometimes a money-saver. Smith's bullocks

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broke through Smith's hedge and devastated Jones's garden. Jones was starting out to instruct his lawyer when he met Smith, in real distress at the accident, and offering the fullest apologies.

"And of course," said Smith, "you must let me know what the damage is, and you shall have my cheque at once."

"Oh, well," said Jones. "The damage is too trivial to be worth talking about. Come in and have a drink."

Here is a still more remarkable case. A woman entering a Tube train had a deadly weapon sticking three inches out of her hat. An inadvertent movement on her part caused the weapon to enter a man's eye.

"Oh, dear!" she said. "I am so very, very sorry. I fear my hat-pin went into your eye."

"Pray don't apologize," said the man, raising his hat. "I have another."

But women with hat-pins should remember that not all men could reach this pitch of chivalry. I know one for certain who could not, and believe I could find others.

FIDELITY IN MARRIAGE

THERE are many fidelities. The fidelity of a dog to a man is not the same as the fidelity of a man to a woman, and is much safer to back. Fidelity to principles may become a hobby and survive after the principles have got the moth. In friendship, fidelity is more common among men: in love, fidelity is more common among women.

If two normal people love one another and marry

FIDELITY IN MARRIAGE

young, it is likely that for the first seven years fidelity will be easy for both. In the second seven years the time of trial may come for either, but it is more likely to come to the man and will be more severe in his case. (It may be observed in parenthesis that it is as wise to demand the same morality in both sexes as to demand the same physique, but not wiser.) Fidelity that has survived for fifteen years will probably survive for life.

We have been advised to hitch our wagon to a star. Our objections are, firstly, that it is not possible to do it; and, secondly, that if it were we should have to say good-bye to the wagon. The highest ideal is complete fidelity in marriage, and we are more likely to attain it by remembering that we are earthly and by studying the points of danger than by persistent star-gazing.

The flirtations of a married man are passionate. The flirtations of a married woman may be the same, but are frequently no more than an ice-cold experiment. She is getting older, her charms are waning a little, she wonders if she can still attract. She wishes to assure herself by a practical test that she is not yet demagnetized. In her flirtation she does not want to attract, but to know that she could if she liked.

The happiness of a marriage may depend upon fidelity, but it does not depend solely on that. There are many possible causes for fidelity. If the cause be love, happiness is likely: if the cause be a sense of duty, this is generally accompanied by other high qualities, and happiness is possible. But fidelity may be based solely on a desire to avoid scandal. This will produce no happiness. It will not make a mean man any the less mean, nor a peevish woman good-tempered. Nor will it make their prolonged association any the less detestable.

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Love gives fidelity, but with some men love in a changed form may survive it. Many a faithless husband truly and deeply loves his wife, would do all that he could for her, and would be brokenhearted if he lost her. Every day things happen which, the inexperienced decide, cannot happen.

To the young lover fidelity is a beauty: to the good man it becomes a duty: to the elderly and miserable cynic it is a capacity for living solely on cold mutton.

HUMILITY

HUMILITY takes its value from its proprietor and exhibitor. It may stand high or it may stand low. There is a humility which arises from excessive introspection and defective spirit. Its proprietor is a rabbit. He is also a worm. He is likewise an embarrassing person. He speaks of the many defects which he has indisputably got, and we do not know what to say next. For we wish to be kind, but we really must be plausible. This humility stands low.

Then there is the man who has done splendid things. He seems unconscious that there is any splendour going. He tells you of his failures. He chuckles over a story showing how he made a fool of himself. He never mentions his successes, and sidetracks the subject if it is introduced by others. This humility stands high.

In other words the value of humility varies inversely as the reason for its existence—the more the reason the less the value.

If a man does one thing supremely well and another

HUMILITY

thing but moderately, he is much more likely to be humble about the first than about the second. Our great musician is modest enough about his music, but hear him on the subject of his golf.

For most of us our humility is not a virtue: it is a necessity.

If you would love humility, study rancid self-satisfaction. You will have many opportunities. Those who find humility difficult should avoid the scholastic and theatrical professions.

The schoolmaster for too many months in a year receives too much respect from too many small boys. He is apt to forget that enforced respect is not voluntary respect. In this case he finds it difficult to talk to his equals in the holidays. In fact he does not talk; he just continues to take a class.

The good actor in a sympathetic part is greatly applauded on certain afternoons and on every night in the week except Sunday. He is apt to forget that the applause is more for the part assumed than for the skill in assumption. Only those who are naturally humble can stand the ordeal.

The safest profession is that of the astronomer. This absolutely stamps humility into the soul. There is no historical instance of a vain astronomer. Even the unscientific man who looks upward on a starry night is inclined to wonder if he really matters as much as he thought he did the day before yesterday.

AFFECTATIONS

AFFECTATIONS may be of many kinds. But they all have the same origin—the desire of a commonplace person to be in some way distinguished. They all run the same course of monotonous failure, for no affectation ever convinces. They all result in a general distrust and dislike of the person affected.

The distrust and dislike may even be carried to a disproportionate and unjust extent, for it is easier to forgive a bad but genuine vice than what is called an innocent affectation.

Angela (not the one that you know), for social purposes, combines in her talk the kittenish and the slightly shocking. It is a misfit. She does not talk like that in the home-circle, and everybody knows it. In consequence, nobody would leave her alone for ten minutes with an opened letter which she was not meant to read. People say that Angela does herself an injustice. She does not. But she does the thing that is certain to make them do her an injustice.

With the plain business man the deal goes quickly. An exchange of letters or even of spoken words may be enough. With the man who has one or more affectations—they are more common with business men than some would suppose—you look up his sleeves, you spend time in thinking out where the catch is, and finally you instruct the clever solicitor to draw up the hard steel document with no leaks in it.

In art affectation prospers better for a time. At present affectation is to be found in poetry, painting, and music, though some of it is getting a little frayed round

ARTIFICIAL EMOTION

the edges. It cannot stay long. No affectation ever becomes a centenarian. In this connexion remember that a mannerism is not an affectation. A mannerism has its roots in personality: an affectation has its roots in the want of it.

Affectation being a proved and predestined failure, it would be thought that by now it would have dropped out of use. And it is true you will find very little of it in the men, women, and departments which are getting on in the direction in which they wish to get. Otherwise, affectation flourishes and abounds.

A woman twenty years ago once spent two days in Dublin, and she has ever since spoken with what she believes to be an Irish accent, to the despair of her friends and to the amazement and fury of those native Irish whom she chances to meet. It is not an isolated case.

The only explanation is that, as somebody remarked whose name I omitted to note at the time, hope springs eternal in the human breast—without any visible means of subsistence.

ARTIFICIAL EMOTION

IT is curious that some men and more women will pay good money and wait an hour in the queue outside the theatre in order to have their hearts pulped by the sob-merchant. If we avoid sorrow in real life and yet seek it in the theatre, it may be because in real life sorrow lasts too long, and in the theatre we can depend that it will be all over by 10.55 P.M.

There is perhaps a shortage of natural emotion in real

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life. Many a man of sixty could not recall sixty occasions on which he had felt strong natural emotion. One insipid day has followed another in a life of routine. Hence the market for synthetic emotion, for we live most when we feel most. What we cannot get from real life we buy from the theatre. And at the theatre we find a compensation for a deficiency—those who are least critical undoubtedly get the most for their money.

Emotion inhibits judgment, and judgment inhibits emotion. When the heroine drops on her knees by the bedside of the dying child, waggles her shoulder-blades, and gulps "Ah cannot bear it," some will spot their programmes with their tears: those who are wishing to goodness that some one would teach that woman to speak English will remain dry-eyed.

Those who are most given to artificial emotion are often not accessible to the real article. We get at the cinema the close-up of suffering angel-face with the eyes turned upwards, the expression that suggests stomachic disorder, and a drop of glycerine rolling down her offside cheek. An old gentleman in the best seats mops his eyes and pretends he is blowing his nose—a stratagem that is strangely common, seeing that it is never successful. You think that this is a tender-hearted man. The last thing he did before leaving business was to sack a clerk, who had been with him for fifteen years, for exceeding the age limit. In real life he is so hard that he puts the nether millstone among the also-ran.

Tears produce tears, and laughter calls forth laughter, but love-making on the stage is not so certain to produce sentimental feelings. Women, especially the very young, are attracted by it. It is strange that so many

THE SILVER LINING

schoolgirls like to see their favourite young actor kissing somebody else, but the evidence of the box-office establishes the fact. Here there is a sex differentiation. Most healthy men dislike to see love-making on the stage, and the better it is done the more they dislike it; they have an instinctive feeling that they should not be looking on. The same men may be sentimentally influenced by a love-episode told in print.

In real life anger may produce anger; if A is angry with B, it is likely that B will shortly be angry with A. But anger depicted on the stage is without effect, nor is it in any part of the playwright's or film-producer's business to make an audience angry. But they fall into it sometimes—particularly the film people.

It makes one angry to see the hero buy trouble for himself by imbecilities that would disgrace a child of six. It makes one even more angry to see him recover his fortune at a race meeting. The race is run under Film Rules, which are different from others, but ensure a close finish.

I saw that screened once. A strong-looking man in the audience was carried out in a swoon. He was a bookmaker.

THE SILVER LINING

IN my very early childhood I made a list of people to be distrusted. At the top of the list came the next-door dog—sometimes friendly, but of uncertain temper. If I took it a biscuit I could never be sure which it would bite. My governess came second on the list, on the ground that the consolations she administered to

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me in my sorrows were deceptive. It was from her that I first heard that the darkest cloud had a silver lining. I knew at once that there was a catch in it somewhere.

That silver lining is still, so to speak, waving in the breeze, in spite of the fact that the saying has more snags in it than three miles of barbed wire.

If the dark cloud has the silver lining, then the silver lining has the dark cloud, and it all depends upon which side you go in at. It is just as true that you may go from the light to the dark as that you may go from the dark to the light. The same argument that is to bring hope to the miserable would, logically, bring despair to the happy.

But, in fact, luck does not go in alternate layers. Because you turn up six black cards in succession it does not follow that the seventh will be red. It does not follow, but there is a magnificent establishment, standing in beautiful grounds, in the Principality of Monaco, which pays all its expenses with part of the money it takes from those who once thought it did, or supposed that in some other way luck was calculable. When luck is calculable, it is not luck: it is arithmetic.

It is true that the clouds of adversity do often bring out all that is best in a man—his pluck, his resource, tenacity, and sense of humour. "Ah," says the consolatory governess, "that is just what my proverb means!" It is not what it says. In this case the silver lining is not in the cloud at all: it is in the man. In the case of a weak-kneed and despondent man there would be no argent phenomenon at all, and there might be a suicide.

Similarly, prosperity—particularly sudden prosperity

THE MISER

—may bring out the worst in a man and show him to be boastful, insolent, self-indulgent, and lazy. But nobody finds it necessary to make a proverb that the brightest prosperity is lined black astrakhan throughout. We do not blame the prosperity: we blame the man.

The good bridge-player neither exults when he wins nor squeals when he loses. This is a matter of manners, but it is also a matter of wisdom. Knowing that he cannot control luck, he concentrates on the things that he can control, such as the play of his hand. In the larger game of life you will do well to imitate him. Whether fortune lifts you up or casts you down, say as little as possible about it and get on with your work.

When I come to think it over I see that I made an error in compiling that list of people to be distrusted. I ought really to have put the consolatory governess (the silver-lining merchant) first and the next-door dog second. But I was very young and impressionable at that time, and probably it was the dog that had last stung me.

The dog is dead, but the silver lining still flourishes. Deceptive consolation wrapped in terse metaphor lives long.

THE MISER

THERE are many mean men: the miser, a mean man who has carried his opinions to their logical conclusion, is rare. He lives in privacy, but his death brings him into the newspapers. He dies of starvation and neglect, alone in a verminous house. Sovereigns

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are hidden in the bed and banknotes in the teapot. His bank balance is in four figures, and his investments are considerable. He is called invariably an "eccentric recluse" in the newspaper: any reporter who failed to call him that would lose his job.

We despise him. We despise most things that we do not understand.

Originally he seeks power in the only way he knows. Money expended is to him power lost: money saved is power gained. If we despise the miser for seeking power, why admire Napoleon?

Contrast the miser with the man of sudden wealth. The latter buys respectful treatment from those who make a living by selling it. By a large expenditure on tasteless hospitalities and ill-considered benefactions he tries to buy our esteem. The miser has not this weakness. Perhaps his only claim to our esteem is that he will never spend a farthing to buy it.

The little girl cut the almond-icing from her slice of cake, intending to eat that last because she loved it most and felt that everything which followed almond-icing would be an anticlimax. But before she had eaten her way to her objective the earthquake destroyed her. The miser is in a similar case. He intends to enjoy the power that his money will give him, but he postpones the hour of enjoyment till death intervenes. Nor is he wholly unreasonable in this. For whereas the power associated with a high position, won by character and ability, can be used without being lessened, the power that money gives lasts only so long as the money lasts.

And so ultimately he prefers potentiality to power, and the means are more to him than the end. He finds no satisfaction in deciding that he will, but he has a

UNCONVENTIONALITY

secret and morose pleasure in thinking that he could if he would.

A business man without enterprise, an ambitious man without courage, an ascetic without holiness, he pays for his sins and blunders in his lifetime. The murderer may escape justice, the swindler may grow rich undetected, but the miser always has to pay. And while the self-indulgent man pays for what he has had, the miser pays for what he has missed.

Despise him? You might as well despise a man because he was born blind.

UNCONVENTIONALITY

WHEN a word gets a halo round it, it becomes dangerous. It bludgeons argument, it knocks out thought.

'Unconventional' was an innocent little word once. It is not even mentioned in the pocket-dictionary which for the past forty years has saved me from misspelling such words as 'seize' and 'apartment.' 'Unconventional' meant not conforming to accepted usage, and so far as I know was content with its job and never wanted to mean any more. Then the halo grew on it. It became accepted that any departure from accepted usage must be an advance and a proof of originality. It is not necessarily either. But the idea appealed to the young who wished to make things easier for themselves. And thereafter 'unconventional' became a word of wondering approbation, assuming everything, proving nothing, and capable of various renderings.

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The hostess said: "I am afraid you will find us rather unconventional."

What the hostess meant was: "You won't have quite such a dull time as you generally do."

What the young man thought she meant was: "There will be considerable laxity as to the proprieties." And he accepted.

What the old man thought she meant was: "Bad cooking and unpunctuality." And he refused politely.

To-day 'unconventionality' is a hard-worked word. I have heard it applied as a compliment, if not as an excuse, for many things, including the following: cigarette-smoking by the female, refusal to wear a hat by the male, Scriabin, bobbed hair, failure to attend the services of the Church, whisky-and-soda for breakfast (but this was in America and many years ago), Cubist painting, sandals, novels by Miss Ethel M. Dell (but this was by the Rector's daughter), sculpture by Epstein, free love, all the best-known politicians, *vers libre* and occasionally poetry, and stage pyjamas.

It cannot be supposed that the word 'unconventional' applied to all of these in the same degree, or even in the same sense; but in every case it was regarded as the closure of the argument.

It is time that this tired word was given a rest and that its halo was removed. In art the sort of unconventionality which would make art more easy should always be suspect. In real life unconventionality should be judged on its merits. It may be an advance or it may not. In any case it must be remembered that unconventionality is not originality. You could think of a variation on the accepted formulæ of politeness—any

VENGEANCE

child could do it—but you would be merely a nuisance if you did.

Unconventionality is not an excuse for anything: but genius is an excuse for unconventionality.

VENGEANCE

IT is seldom that any kind of wickedness becomes unfashionable, but vengeance does seem to have dropped out.

On the stage in Victorian days, towards the end of the fourth act, the hero could talk like this: "Jasper Darkwood, by your forged documents you robbed me of my inheritance, you caused me to be wrongly suspected of murder, you poisoned my canary, ran away with my wife, and kidnapped my only child. But at last—ay, at last—I have you in my power." Heroes of modern drama cannot talk like this; they have other ways of being silly.

In real life to-day, if Jasper—bad lot, these Jaspers—runs away with your wife, you may, if he has been thoughtful enough to leave his address, call on him and use violence. But that is merely temper—it is not romantic vengeance. You may instruct your solicitor, but our ancestors did not dignify legal proceedings by the name of vengeance.

Are we then more moral than our ancestors? It is not so much that we are more moral as that we have less time. An old-fashioned full-blooded vengeance, planned out on the large scale, might take seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years. You might die before it was accomplished, and have to turn it into a family feud.

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The only class that has the leisure for it to-day is the idle rich, and this class is more likely to inspire the lust for vengeance than to feel it. Most of us have to work for a living, and if we take Saturday afternoon off for a vengeance, how are we to watch the football?

Again, vengeance demands concentration, and we have very little to spare. The man who does not concentrate on his job is extremely likely to lose it.

And once more, our ancestors seem to have had better memories than we have. In the improbable event of any average man to-day taking on even a seven-year vengeance, long before he realized his objective he would have had to refer back to an old diary to remind himself what the girl's name was.

As for the inherited vengeance, the family feud, there may be some instances extant in the wilder parts of Scotland, where they are romantic out of business hours, and there may be a few more in Ireland, where assassination is more a matter of etiquette than of any ill-feeling, but I doubt if in prosaic England you would find one family feud in good working order and still functioning.

Still, thousands of playwrights, poets, and novelists have found vengeance a most useful subject; it is better as a subject than as a ruler.

PRIVILEGE

A PRIVILEGE, however worthless it is intrinsically, will always be valued by those who have it, and resented by those who have it not.

At a certain girls' school there was a curious edict

PRIVILEGE

that pupils below the age of twelve were not permitted to take mustard at meal-times. Whether this was from a desire to spare the infant inwards or to economize the mustard I know not. But every girl who reached the privileged age immediately took mustard lavishly and ostentatiously, though it made her eyes water, and blistered her tongue, and she detested the taste of it.

The ordinary man wears a hat and thinks nothing about it. But the man who has the hereditary privilege of remaining covered in the presence of the Sovereign values the privilege highly.

The pleasure of the man with the privileged hat and of the girl with the privileged mustard is a rational pleasure. A privilege conferred is a sign of recognition. The man is pleased that the service of an ancestor is still recognized. The girl's pleasure is more direct: it is recognized that she is no longer a child and subject to childish restrictions. The absurdity lies solely in the privilege itself and in those who bestow it. Why should the school mark the first step towards liberty with mustard? Why should the monarch reward service to himself by permitting disrespect to his successors?

The privilege which has a money-value as a rule has no honour-value, but to this there are exceptions. For instance, the privilege of being a Cabinet Minister is honourable, but it may be accompanied by a salary which the recipient could not earn at any other occupation.

The essence of a privilege is its limitation. The greater the number of those who cannot possess it, the more valued is the possession. The fireworks require the night, but probably the night resents it. No man, except a philosopher, likes to be a piece of background.

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When the local mayor wangles a knighthood at last far more of his friends will congratulate him than will ever forgive him.

As for the privilege of title, it is always disgraceful to seek an unearned honour: it is generally ungracious to refuse an earned honour. The man who refuses an earned honour mostly attaches more importance both to himself and to the honour than either deserves.

We shall always have privilege. The man who tells you that one man is as good as another is seldom able to demonstrate it as far as he himself is concerned.

THE FLIRT

FLIRTATION is an old-fashioned word, and in the course of years some of the rules have been changed. But the game, like human nature, is unaltered in its essentials. It is played by one woman against several men. The woman generally wins. The only reason for saying that it is played for love is that it is not played for money.

The moralists have always been severe with the flirt and called her vain and cruel. She may be, and she may be the reverse. Really, these moralists should think before they preach. One of the commonest causes of deliberate flirtation is humble self-distrust.

For instance, a woman reaches an age when she doubts if she still keeps her charm and attraction in their full youthful power. If she were vain she would be sure of it. Because she is humble she makes a few man-subjugating experiments to reassure herself. There is no cruelty in her motive. When Alfred Thickear of

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HURRY

Hornsey knocks out William Nose in the fifth round, he does not do it to hurt Bill, with whom he may be on the best of terms. Apart from financial reasons, he does it to show others that he can. The flirt wishes to show herself that she can.

Men who mistake pity for love, as sometimes happens, will mistake kindness for cruelty. And here the vanity is not with the flirt—if indeed in such a case she can be called a flirt.

For those that find it more interesting to look on at life than live it, it is pretty to watch a consummate flirt on her busy evening. She may have no other art but her own, but in her own she is perfect. She can do more work with her unaided—well, almost unaided—eyelashes than a good carpenter can in a different line with a well-stocked workshop at his command. As she talks to her victim of some prosaic subject, she makes her eyes say: "Only you, my beloved, have ever quite understood me." It cannot be easy. Any man who tried to do as much as that with his eyes would look like the death-agony of a poisoned fish.

We must reprove her, for she deceives others. She is for ever laying the table for a dinner which she has no intention of serving. But sometimes she is punished—that happens when she deceives herself.

HURRY

SMITH and his wife lived six miles from a town and were not on the 'phone. So when Mrs Smith was taken suddenly ill, Smith hurried to fetch a doctor. Being in a hurry he drove his car without his usual

BARRY PAIN

caution, and had a nasty accident before he had gone a mile. The consequence was that his poor wife never received any medical aid and made a rapid and satisfactory recovery.

Pace alone is not evidence of hurry. At bridge the good quick player never hurries, but the bad slow player sometimes does. The young man walks a certain distance in fifty minutes without trouble, but when the old man tries to walk the same distance in an hour he is told at the hospital that he should not have hurried. In the production of a good daily newspaper there is considerable rapidity, but no hurry.

Hurry begins at the point where increased speed causes decreased efficiency. It saves the time at the expense of the work. By hurrying you may save one minute in five and waste the other four.

Why do people hurry? Every man has got as many minutes to the hour as the next man.

The tendency towards it may be constitutional. The highly nervous, over-energized type tends to hurry, but is likely to correct itself as it is generally intelligent.

Sometimes the tendency is acquired in consequence of undue worship of the speed-god. It is difficult to say why speed is worshipped at all. The highest speed you can attain, and the highest speed which anything man may make can attain, looks a little paltry when compared with the velocity of light.

But we do worship speed. If you can do something quicker than anybody else, fame, and occasionally fortune, are yours. And it does not much matter what the thing you do is. Somewhere or other there lives the man who claims to be able to eat three pounds of sausages in a shorter time than any other man on earth.

REPEATERS

I do not know where he is, nor do I want to know, but I am certain he is somewhere. He is proud of his achievement, and so are his family and friends. A framed certificate and probably a medal hang over his mantelpiece. He is pointed out excitedly in the street as the man who holds the sausage-eating record.

And when one thinks of these things it makes one resolve never to do anything quickly any more.

REPEATERS

WRITING is better protected than talking. He who commits the indiscretion of talking is at the mercy of the repeater. The repeater can be deadly.

Gathering his little audience about him, the repeater tells of some intimate, piquant, and slightly scandalous detail in the life of, say, some prominent politician. "And," he adds proudly, "I know it's true because I had it from the man himself."

What he wishes to demonstrate is that he has the confidence of that politician. What he really does demonstrate is that he does not deserve the confidence of anybody.

Again, Mr Smith—one may say it without flattery—tells a good story extremely well. Next day the repeater will tell as much of it as he can remember and reduce the whole thing to flavourless, pointless pulp. Then, when he fails to gain a smile from his hearers, he will be sure to add, "I got that one from Smith—didn't think much of it myself."

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What can we say of such a man? May the hyena and the wart-hog destroy the tomb of his great-aunt!

Worse remains. Unless we are beyond reason we do not think we are beyond criticism. We are vaguely conscious that our friends may sometimes say something uncomplimentary about us, or mildly ridicule us when we are not there. Unless it is something serious, they are within their rights.

But that social pest, that noisome slug, the repeater, comes and tells you the actual words your friend used, and adds piously that he thought he ought to warn you. You would not be human if it did not for a time upset your peace of mind. Reflecting afterwards that the chances are a hundred to one that he did not give you the actual words, or at any rate did not give the way they were said, and that he probably had no motive but to wound you, you will not, if you are wise, let him make much difference.

Strictly speaking, you should afterwards forgive the repeater. There is no hurry. Leave it for some wet afternoon when you have nothing better to do.

Yet a girl of fourteen explained to me that her popularity at school was due to the fact that she repeated things.

"For instance," she said, "if Polly-wolly tells me the Ink-bird is not as plain as she looks and has got nice eyes, I make it a little better and then tell the Ink-bird she said so. So they both love me." Nicknames seem to be prevalent at that school. "Last term Freckles and the Ghost quarrelled about nothing and wouldn't speak. So I told Freckles lots of nice things Ghost had said about her, and told Ghost lots of nice things that Freckles had said about her, and now they get on all

IMPLICATION

right and both like me enormously. Neither of them had ever really said the things, of course, but the Bible says peacemakers are blessed."

It was my duty to remind her that the Bible also had something to say about liars. But I incline to think that the girl had the seeds of wisdom in her.

IMPLICATION

THE comedian narrates how he insulted the other man, and continues: "And when I got up again . . ." When that was new the comedian got his laugh. He would not have got it by actually saying that the other man knocked him down; he gets it by implying it and not saying it.

Implication is generally more effective than direct statement. Give a man a direct statement and he feels that he has only your word for it. Imply the same thing and he knows he has dug out the truth for himself.

The good story-writer never says that his heroine is charming, and the reader would not believe him if he did. The writer implies it in telling the woman's looks, feelings, behaviour, and words; the reader deduces that she is charming, is convinced of it, and is quite sure that he has found it out unassisted.

The modern snob is more complicated than the older types that Thackeray depicted. He is particularly anxious that he shall not be considered a snob. So he never brags, but he is very skilful in implication. He never tells you in so many words that he is distantly

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related to a live earl, or that he is almost the second-best ping-pong player in Wimbledon. But he takes great care that you shall know it indirectly.

Every artist appreciates implication; it is one of the principal factors in artistic economy. It is by implication that he gets the exact effect he wants at the least expenditure of words. It is there that he takes the most trouble and seems to have taken the least. Consequently from the artist's point of view the best and most admirable thing in a magazine is sometimes one of the advertisements.

The advertiser pays for space, and it costs him to talk. He cannot afford to waste a word. Between two adjectives he must always choose the one which will most surely get there. He may not always have artistic ability, but he always works under a real artistic stimulus.

Years and years and then some more years ago some genius was the first to use 'old-world' appropriately in a house agent's advertisement. The word was packed with implications and pictures. It suggested age and genuineness, roses and nightingales, beauty and permanence. But imitation is the curse of genius. We get too much 'old-world' in those advertisements now. We read of an 'old-world' maisonette in Brondesbury, where it would be more discreet to confine the vocabulary to 'h. & c.' and suchlike.

Try to see what you can do with implication. You may find out that you are an artist.

MILLIONAIRES

MILLIONAIRES

NO man ever became very rich by taking care of the pence and letting the pounds take care of themselves. Nor is wealth often obtained by the great ability and strenuous work of one man only. But it may result from his judicious employment of the ability and work of many others.

One important factor is the amount of the money-unit used in thinking out the steps of a career. If two men start with equal abilities and equal opportunities, and one of them habitually thinks with the ten-shilling unit, and the other with a thousand-pound unit, at the end of twenty years the first will still be earning his annual £500 unless sacked for old age or some other vice: the second will be either a bankrupt or a millionaire.

The first neglects all opportunities that seem too big for him; the second all that do not. One closes the door against disaster: the other opens it to fortune. One learns bookkeeping: the other studies finance. It takes precisely the same ability to play bridge excellently at a shilling a hundred as at five pounds a hundred, but the reward of the ability in the latter case is a hundred times greater.

Distinguish between practical thinking with the high money-unit and the idle dreaming of the possession of great wealth which is always useless and often dangerous. The one deals with the journey there; the other with the baseless supposition that you have already arrived. The habit of practical thinking with the high unit is probably, like poesy, an inborn gift.

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If it could be easily acquired there would be more millionaires.

The millionaire, when the railway-porter has carried his bag to the special train, does not reward the man with a recreation-park or a large annuity. However the rich man made his money, it was not by losing his sense of proportion; there are story-writers who need to remember this. Since petty expenditure can be delegated it is more likely that the porter will receive rather less than he expects and will get it from the personal attendant of the valet of one of the millionaire's junior secretaries.

All millionaires assure us that wealth is not happiness. All of them are of the simplest tastes, could live on £3 a week and save money, and would prefer it. The terrific responsibility of wealth keeps them awake o' nights and poisons their lives. Yet they do not take the remedy which seems obvious, and even display a certain amount of tenacity; no doubt they do not wish to push their suffering on to those who have done nothing to deserve it.

In old-fashioned fiction the millionaire was vulgar and uneducated. We have changed that. In to-day's story he is strong and silent, though in the early chapters he can be very hard. Mothers with daughters of dazzling beauty and high lineage scheme for him, and the daughters put in good work also. But there is in the story a poor girl of no great beauty, but with soft eyes and a gentle heart; she is like a shy little mouse, we are told. You can safely put the entire parcel on Mouse-girl for the Matrimonial Stakes without worrying about place-money.

ROUTINE

ROUTINE generally lessens labour at the cost of intelligence.

A business man had an amanuensis. She was accurate and rapid. Every working day for three years she had taken down his letters in shorthand, typed them, and presented them for inspection and signature. Then he tried an experiment. He dictated a letter to a non-existent firm in the most correct business phraseology, asking on what terms they would undertake the assassination of his junior partner. The letter was brought back to him with the rest, correctly typed and without any comment. The meaning of the letters had never concerned her and had long ceased to get through to her mind. The want of intelligence was not in the worker, but in the way in which she was worked. A better man would have made his amanuensis a second memory.

But routine is not, as some think, necessarily condemned. Suppose a man is engaged continuously during his working hours in repeating one very small operation which is a contribution to the production of a motor-car. Thus far he becomes a human machine. But if the economy of this method of production enables the employer to give more leisure and higher wages, then he is providing greater scope for the exercise of free intelligence in the non-working hours.

For the elderly, routine is probably salutary. The grooves are worn deep, and it is no longer easy to make others. One would like to know how many men who retired from business at sixty afterwards found they

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must go back to it or to some other business; and how many who did not go back suffered some breakdown in health. It is better to die in harness than in a nursing-home.

But the young will ever hate routine. Only the very meek and lowly of heart submit to it gladly. Only they will catch the 8.40 A.M. every working morning and the 6.10 P.M. every evening, with the 1.5 P.M. on Saturdays with any luck, and see without dismay the prospect of continuing to do this for the rest of their natural lives. Many, many more will grumble furiously, and keep on grumbling.

And out of the ruck will emerge one highly intelligent young man who hates routine more than any of them and says less about it. He does not grumble, because he is too busy going upstairs. If you call on him in twenty-five or thirty years' time you are likely to be told that the manager cannot see anybody without an appointment.

OLD AGE

CICERO wrote a book in defence of old age. He had defended other criminals also. He was an orator, and it is a good general rule to distrust orators. Had he been living to-day he would not be writing in defence of old age: he would be too busy with his inquiries about the monkey-gland treatment for the renewal of youth.

An elderly man in good health was strap-hanging in the Tube. A girl got up and begged him to take her seat. She was a kind girl, but that was the cruellest

OLD AGE

thing that was done in London that day. He had never been publicly accused of old age before. Now he could ignore it no longer.

Old age has a long list of physical infirmities and disabilities. It is feeble and ridiculous. Quite a large number of funny stories are told about somebody described as a deaf old gentleman.

Experience is valuable, but the experience of the old has generally had its personal value taken out. It is composed of knowledge that has been delivered too late. The old man has learned how to deal with dangers which in his case no longer exist. He can issue his warnings to the young, but the young resent warnings except from those of their own age or rather less.

The old man's partial loss of memory has a similar bitterness in it, for he remembers what he had better forget and forgets what he had better remember. He forgets the name of the man he met yesterday and the appointment he made for to-morrow. He remembers vividly blunders of his youth which cannot be redeemed and happiness which cannot be recalled.

No, the defence of old age is not possible. It is a convicted criminal, and we look forward to its execution at the hands of science one of these days.

And yet we find old people who are contented and seemingly happy. This may be because they are not really old. The age of the mind does not always synchronize with the age of the body. There is a simple and certain test. If you wish to learn nothing more, your mind is old. If you are still eager to learn, your mind is young, and retains its elasticity and energy.

Also, it may happen that those whose minds are really old are too lethargic to realize their own misery.

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Is there nothing, then, to be said for old age? There is perhaps just this. Death, which comes to the young as a terror and as an enemy, comes to the aged and suffering as a friend who holds the key and unlocks the door.

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